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Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly the forty-third report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, which was submitted pursuant to Assembly resolution 65/102.

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Summary

The present report reflects information gathered during the Special Committee's mission to the occupied Palestinian territory, specifically the Gaza Strip. The Committee also convened meetings in Jordan. The report places emphasis on the situation of children in the occupied Palestinian territory, the situation of Palestinians detained by Israel and Israel's blockade of Gaza. It also addresses continuing concerns throughout the occupied territories, such as confiscation of land, demolitions, expansion of settlements and restrictions on freedom of movement.

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I. Introduction

1. The Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories was established in 1968 by the General Assembly in its resolution 2443 (XXIII). It is composed of three Member States: Sri Lanka (Chairperson), Malaysia and Senegal. This year the Committee was chaired by Mr. Palitha T. B. Kohona, Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations in New York. The Committee was also comprised of Mr. Dato' Hussein Haniff, Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations in New York, and Mr. Fodé Seck, Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations Office at Geneva.

II. Mandate

2. The mandate of the Special Committee, as set out in resolution 2443 (XXIII) and subsequent resolutions, is to investigate Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the population of the occupied territories. The occupied territories are considered those remaining under Israeli occupation, namely, the occupied Syrian Golan and the occupied Palestinian territory, which comprises the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip.

3. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 65/102. By this resolution, the Assembly requested the Special Committee, "pending complete termination of the Israeli occupation, to continue to investigate Israeli policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, especially Israeli violations of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and to consult, as appropriate, with the International Committee of the Red Cross according to its regulations in order to ensure that the welfare and human rights of the peoples of the occupied territories are safeguarded and to report to the Secretary-General as soon as possible and whenever the need arises thereafter". The Assembly also requested the Committee "to continue to investigate the treatment and status of the thousands of prisoners and detainees, including children and women, in Israeli prisons and detention centres in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967".

III. Activities of the Special Committee

A. Efforts to initiate dialogue with the Government of Israel

4. Since the General Assembly established the Special Committee, the Government of Israel has refused to recognize or cooperate with it. The Committee regrets that, notwithstanding substantial efforts on its part over the past year, the Government of Israel continued its practice of not recognizing or cooperating with it.

5. On 30 May 2011, the Chairman sent a letter to the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations Office at Geneva. The letter informed the Permanent Representative that the Special Committee would convene meetings in Geneva on 14 and 15 June 2011. The letter stated that the Committee would be grateful for an

opportunity to meet with the Permanent Representative and proposed a time and venue for a meeting. No formal response was received from the Permanent Representative. Yet the secretariat was informally informed that, while the Permanent Representative would not accept the Committee's proposed time and venue for such a meeting, it would be possible for the members of the Committee to come to the Permanent Mission of Israel for an informal discussion with the Permanent Representative. It was brought to the attention of the Permanent Mission that the Committee's meetings were being held at the headquarters of the Secretariat, including meetings with other permanent representatives. Still, with a view to initiating an open dialogue with the Government of Israel, the members of the Committee offered to host a working lunch, at its own expense, to which the Permanent Representative would be invited. Nevertheless, the Committee's invitation was refused.

6. On 21 June 2011, the Chairman sent a further letter to the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations Office at Geneva. This letter informed the Permanent Representative of the Special Committee's intention to carry out a mission to the region. The letter requested that the Government of Israel grant full access to the occupied territories and that the Committee be permitted to hold consultations with relevant Israeli authorities regarding the human rights situation in these territories. No response was received.

B. Field mission to investigate Israeli practices

7. Owing to the continuing practice of non-recognition of and non-cooperation with the Special Committee by the Government of Israel, the Committee's annual mission to the region was not able to directly access all of the occupied territories within its mandate, or to hold consultations with relevant Israeli authorities. Yet the Committee was able to carry out its first-ever visit to the occupied Palestinian territory, specifically to the Gaza Strip, by crossing Egypt's border with Gaza. Meetings in the Gaza Strip took place from 21 to 25 July 2011. The Committee also convened meetings in Jordan from 26 to 28 July 2011. In light of the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic during the period in which the mission took place, the Committee was not able to convene meetings there this year. However, the Committee was able to engage with interlocutors in the occupied Syrian Golan, by way of teleconferences convened during the visit to Jordan.

8. The Special Committee sought a wide range of views regarding Israeli practices affecting the human rights situation in the occupied territories. Invitations were extended to Palestinian, Israeli and Syrian victims, witnesses and non-governmental organizations, and support was made available to facilitate their appearance before the Committee. Documentation and other materials submitted to the Committee were reviewed in advance of the preparation of the present report.

9. The Special Committee was particularly grateful to have the opportunity to meet with Ms. Rabeeha Diab, Minister of Women's Affairs, Palestinian Authority, and Mr. Issa Qaraqe, Minister of Prisoners' Affairs, Palestinian Authority. The Committee also met with officials from United Nations agencies. In addition to meetings, while in the Gaza Strip the Committee visited the ash-Shati refugee camp, housing construction projects of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and an UNRWA summer camp for

Palestinian refugee girls. At the conclusion of the visit, in Amman, the Committee held a press conference.

10. The cooperation of the Government of Egypt in facilitating the visit to Gaza of the Special Committee was essential, and the members' gratitude is emphasized in this regard. The members are thankful for the cooperation of the Government of Jordan in the fulfilment of the Committee's visit to Amman. The Committee also expresses its gratitude to the office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Egypt, the Commissioner-General of UNRWA and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory for their valuable assistance in carrying out the mission.

IV. Situation of human rights in the occupied Palestinian territory

A. The Gaza Strip

11. The Gaza Strip is addressed separately in the present report since the Special Committee was able to observe the situation first-hand and to give prominence to the widespread violations resulting from Israel's blockade. The Committee affirms that the Gaza Strip is an integral part of the occupied Palestinian territory. It reaffirms that Israel maintains its status of the occupying power of the Gaza Strip and therefore all of its relevant obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law. The Committee's visit to the Gaza Strip consisted of meetings with 24 witnesses or victims, United Nations agencies working on human rights issues and the above-mentioned visits to a refugee camp, a school construction site and an educational facility.

12. The overarching observation of the Special Committee regarding the situation in Gaza is that Israel's blockade, which has been in place for over four years, continues to collectively punish the civilian population. The Committee further observes that the blockade neither undermines support for the de facto authorities in Gaza nor enhances Israel's security. This collective punishment, which violates Israel's international legal obligations, is having a grave impact on the children of Gaza. The other most urgent concerns that emerged from the Committee's meetings in Gaza include Israeli-enforced restrictions on freedom of movement within Gaza, in particular their impacts on the agricultural and fishing industries, and Israel's restrictions on the importation of materials necessary to reconstruct or build houses, schools and other infrastructure destroyed by Israel during operation "Cast Lead". These specific issues are addressed in detail below, following an overview of the current situation in Gaza.

Overview

13. Of the total population of Gaza, at present approximately 70 per cent (around 1.1 million people) depend on the United Nations for humanitarian assistance. Ten per cent of all jobs in Gaza are sponsored by the United Nations. The rate of unemployment is currently at 40 per cent, while real wages for those who do have jobs have decreased by 30 per cent since Israel initiated its blockade. It was noted that 90,000 Gazans had lost their jobs in Israel owing to the blockade. Furthermore, 90 per cent of the factories in Gaza have stopped work owing to the lack of access

to raw materials. It is in this context that Gaza's private sector economy has nearly come to a halt and that 38 per cent of Gaza's families are struggling with food insecurity.

14. Yet these statistics do not adequately portray key impacts of Israel's blockade on the civilian population of Gaza. The Special Committee received extensive testimony regarding the high prevalence of physical and mental health problems that have resulted from the ongoing blockade. Organizations working on health issues stressed that there had been increases in high blood pressure, cancers and other physical ailments, while psychological conditions, such as depression, conversion disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder were widespread. It was stressed that the people of Gaza were living under an intense degree of psychological trauma, which for many people was leading to a sense of loss of control over their lives and, for some people, deep anger and a proclivity to try to resolve problems through violence. Furthermore, physical problems arising from such intense stress were increasing demands on primary health-care givers, who in many cases were misdiagnosing and prescribing inappropriate medications, including addictive pain killers.

15. Pregnant women, in particular, were suffering: 54 per cent of pregnant women were experiencing depression; 33 per cent were overweight and 33 per cent were suffering from anaemia. It was emphasized that pregnant women did not have access to sufficient nutrients to safely and successfully carry their pregnancies full term. It was alleged that that was likely to be driving the increasing incidence of stunting in Gaza and the fact that 95 per cent of Gaza's water was unfit for human consumption was leading to cases of methaemoglobinaemia ("blue-baby syndrome") among babies born in Gaza. In addition, the Special Committee was briefed on allegations that the Government of Israel has a "red-lines document" that outlines how many calories a day each Gazan requires simply to survive, which according to information received, has been determined by Israeli authorities to be 620, and guides Israeli policies regarding the importation of basic foodstuffs.

The urgent need to reconstruct Gaza

16. The Special Committee saw first-hand that much of the devastation of infrastructure that occurred during Israel's operation "Cast Lead" in December 2008 and January 2009 remains. Interlocutors informed the Committee that the reconstruction of Gaza was not possible in the present circumstances, as Israel's blockade inhibited the importation of sufficient materials. The members received reports that about 51,000 civilians had lost their homes during the operation and that there was a need for about 76,000 homes to be built on an annual basis, including to account for natural population growth. While UNRWA noted that its Gaza recovery plan called for the construction of 100 schools and 10,000 homes, it stressed that the process of receiving Israel's approval for projects was extremely slow, with bureaucratic intricacies making it unnecessarily difficult and burdensomely expensive to carry out construction projects. UNRWA also noted that, currently, only 28 per cent of its Gaza recovery plan had been approved by Israel.

17. One problem that was mentioned by several interlocutors is that Israel is only operating one crossing point for cargo and commercial goods. It was widely acknowledged that a significant amount of goods, including construction materials, is entering Gaza through underground tunnels. Yet the danger of buying such goods

was emphasized, especially since their provenance and quality are unregulated. The Special Committee was informed that some materials smuggled into Gaza through the tunnels had been found to be carcinogenic. Particular concern in that context was expressed in respect of the trustworthiness of medicines that were being smuggled through the tunnels.

18. The need to reconstruct Gaza extends to urgent deficiencies of water treatment and power facilities. As to the latter, several witnesses raised problems related to the lack of sufficient electricity. The Special Committee was informed that 38 per cent of Gaza's electrical needs were not being met. In this context it was recalled that 40 to 45 per cent of Gaza's electricity supply derived from Israel, whereas 10 per cent came from Egypt and the remainder was provided from within Gaza. Witnesses stressed the need for hospitals and blood banks to have a reliable supply of electricity. Other problems connected to the lack of electricity included the negative effects on children's respiratory systems that resulted from the widespread use of generators; the regression to more laborious means of cooking and carrying out other daily activities in the home; and the particular suffering of elderly persons who lived in apartment buildings and could not rely on functioning elevators. With regard to the latter, the Committee was informed of the recent death of an elderly woman who had required oxygen just to get up the stairs to her apartment.

19. In the general context of concerns regarding the importation of goods into Gaza, a number of witnesses raised concerns about the lack of access to cooking gas. The Special Committee was informed that there had been a "cooking gas crisis" for over a year, with Israel only permitting 110 tons daily to enter Gaza, whereas there was a need for 350 tons daily in the winter and 200 tons daily in the summer. That "crisis" had led authorities to strictly ration supplies of cooking gas. Witnesses recalled a 10-day period during which no cooking gas had been allowed to enter Gaza and asserted that the "crisis" especially affected women in Gaza in light of their traditional roles within the family.

Israeli-enforced restrictions on freedom of movement in Gaza

20. Israel's enforcement of its blockade by restricting freedom of movement within certain areas of Gaza, including maritime areas, was a principal concern of several of the Special Committee's interlocutors. The Committee was briefed on the impacts on Gaza's agricultural and fishing industries of Israel's implementation of a so-called "buffer zone" in Palestinian territory adjacent to Israel and the restriction of Gaza's fishing areas. The members were alarmed by consistent allegations that Israel enforces such restrictions through the use of live fire, resulting in the killing and injury of civilians, including children.

21. Witnesses and organizations explained that Israel's "buffer zone" excluded around 35 per cent of Gaza's land territory from agricultural use. The general view of many Gazans is that this land has essentially been confiscated by Israel, notwithstanding the fact that it is unambiguously within Gaza. While it was noted that Israel had dropped leaflets declaring that areas up to 300 metres from the wall between Gaza and Israel were restricted, that anyone entering those areas was liable to be shot and that such a response was justified since residents had been warned, the Special Committee received information that the area of enforcement actually extends beyond 300 metres, with different interlocutors claiming it reaches anywhere from 600 to 1,500 metres. Witnesses informed the members that the

majority of Gaza's livestock used to be kept in that area; however, 50 per cent of the pens had been destroyed by Israel and could not be repaired since it was unsafe to enter the "buffer zone".

22. It was emphasized that those restrictions compounded the destruction of the agricultural industry that had occurred during operation "Cast Lead". Witnesses alleged that the Israeli operation had specifically targeted and destroyed 60,000 dunums of agricultural land, greenhouses and wells, and cattle, poultry and sheep stocks, with immediate losses estimated to be around $200 million. Still, it was noted that it took many years to regrow certain crops and the continuing violence perpetrated against Gaza meant that land and crops that were replanted were frequently redestroyed by Israel, thereby greatly increasing the financial losses of the agricultural industry.

23. Witnesses and organizations also emphasized the extent to which the agricultural industry had been devastated by prohibitions on exports and the quality and availability of water. With regard to the latter, the lack of water treatment facilities meant that the water available was of poor quality and therefore not suitable for agricultural purposes. It was recalled that Gazans used to collect water from Mount Hebron for agriculture, but that seven years ago Israel had diverted that supply for use by Israeli farmers, which had resulted in a shortage of water for Gazan agriculture. With regard to exports, the Special Committee was informed that all agricultural exports were banned, except for small amounts of strawberries and flowers that were channelled through Israeli businesses. Thus, since agricultural products were sold at low prices locally and crops could be exported, farmers were no longer growing many crops. The ban on the import of agricultural materials and the concomitant lowering of the quality of crops, was also cited as undermining the agricultural industry in Gaza.

24. The Special Committee received testimony regarding the sharp decline in Gaza's fishing industry. It was recalled that Gaza used to export fish, but that fish were currently being smuggled into Gaza through tunnels. Witnesses noted that the Oslo Accords allotted 20 nautical miles of maritime area off Gaza as Palestinian territory, but that that had been persistently reduced by Israel, with the result that it was currently only 3 nautical miles. It was consistently stated that the 3 nautical mile area had been nearly depleted of fish. One telling statistic was that fishermen's catches fell by around 50 per cent from 2008 to 2009. The Committee received reports that, as a direct result of Israel's restriction of fishing areas, of the 3,300 registered fishermen in Gaza, 92 per cent now lived in poverty.

25. Two particular aspects of the "buffer zone" and its enforcement appear to have led to the killing and injury of numerous Palestinian civilians, including children and elderly persons. The first is that Israel enforces the prohibition on movement within the zone through the use of live fire, in flagrant violation of the international humanitarian law principle of distinguishing between civilians and persons participating in hostilities. The second is the ambiguity regarding the actual area that Israel considers, in practice, to be within its "buffer zone". It was stressed by a number of interlocutors that those two aspects were equally of concern with respect to Israel's enforcement of restrictions on freedom of movement within Gaza's maritime area. The Special Committee received detailed reports from witnesses, organizations and United Nations agencies regarding Israeli attacks in or near the "buffer zone". The members were dismayed by reports that 17 Palestinian children

had been killed in such incidents in 2010 and further dismayed by reports that three more children had been killed in or near the "buffer zone" in March and April 2011. The Committee was briefed on an Israeli attack that had taken place on 12 September 2010, which had resulted in the killing of a 91-year-old man, his 16-year-old grandson and a 17-year-old friend. It was noted that they had been farming their land in an area approximately 600 metres from the Israeli wall around Gaza. The Committee also received an account of Israeli attacks that had taken place on 7 and 8 April at a farm near Khan Younis, which resulted in 5 civilians killed, including a father and his child, as well as 14 civilians wounded, including 5 children. In addition, the members heard accounts of frequent live-fire attacks on Palestinian fishing boats by Israeli naval forces, including within the allotted 3 nautical mile limit.

The situation of children in Gaza

26. The Special Committee received extensive information on the grave impact that Israel's blockade is having on children in Gaza. Frequent direct exposure to extreme violence, including being victims of such violence, a general feeling of helplessness and lack of opportunities, obstruction of the right to education and rapidly deteriorating physical and mental health constitute the most immediate concerns.

27. Witnesses drew the members' attention to indicators of particular concern with respect to children's health: 75 per cent of children at the age of nine months were anaemic; 13 per cent of children under 5 years of age suffered from malnutrition; and 25 per cent of children did not eat breakfast. It was asserted that deficiencies in iron, iodine and vitamins A and D were diminishing children's capacity for learning. The Special Committee was informed that 26 per cent of Gaza's children exhibited serious difficulties concentrating; 23 per cent of Gaza's children suffered from bedwetting; the incidence of children suffering from epilepsy was rising; and a general inability to withstand pressure was increasingly common. The Committee was repeatedly told that the climate of deep anxiety, tension and stress was contributing to increased incidences of behavioural problems in schools and homes, including the use of violence. The members were also told of 20 instances within the past year when Israeli authorities had denied Palestinian children the possibility of travelling to receive necessary medical treatment and that in one such instance a 3-year-old child had died while awaiting permission to travel.

28. Much of the information conveyed to the Special Committee regarding the situation of children in Gaza concerned access to education. The members were informed of the lack of facilities for 40,000 children who were entitled to attend UNRWA schools. In response to the shortage of schools, UNRWA was operating 95 per cent of its schools on a double shift basis, and was using shipping containers as classrooms. Even the containers were severely overcrowded, having to accommodate up to 50 children at the same time, with 3 children at each desk. Numerous interlocutors stressed the negative impact on educational standards that followed from such overcrowding. The Committee was informed that in the past year around 40,000 students had not qualified to proceed to the next level of their studies and, as such, would need to repeat their current level. The Committee was worried to learn that school enrolment in Gaza had been steadily decreasing since 2007.

29. As noted, the UNRWA Gaza recovery plan envisages the construction of 100 new schools. However, the above-mentioned restrictions and complications related to importing construction materials are seriously inhibiting the building of the required schools. They also inhibit the importation of essential school supplies, such as pencils and books. Witnesses further explained that restrictions on freedom of movement placed additional burdens on educational institutions in Gaza, since students could no longer pursue educational opportunities in the West Bank or abroad.

30. A further serious concern brought to the attention of the Special Committee was the precarious situation of the 65,000 to 75,000 children who live in or near the "buffer zone". These children can only travel to and from school in fully clear light of day, otherwise they risk being shot at by Israeli security forces. This concern is especially relevant given that so many schools are operating on a double shift basis and therefore classes take place during a wider range of hours. Furthermore, the Committee was informed that the declining rate of school enrolment was being matched by an increasing rate of child labour, in particular in and near the "buffer zone". According to information received, one of the main sources of work for children in that area was to collect scrap building materials to sell at the local market. In light of the restrictions on the importation of building materials, such materials were in demand and brought much needed money for families in poverty. However, Israel's policy and practice of using live fire to enforce restrictions on freedom of movement within Gaza, as discussed above, put those children at extreme risk. The Committee was briefed on several incidents of children carrying out such work being killed or injured over the past year.

31. Against this backdrop, witnesses and organizations informed the Special Committee that there was a serious lack of opportunities and hope for the children of Gaza. It was noted that every year up to 17,000 students graduated from school and then could not find jobs. Witnesses questioned how Gaza could empower its children, in their current circumstances, to live productive, meaningful and peaceful lives. The view was repeatedly expressed that that lack of opportunities and hope greatly increased the probability of youths being encouraged to extremism.

B. The West Bank, including East Jerusalem

32. The Special Committee met with 19 victims, witnesses and representatives of organizations in Amman, with a view to gathering information about the situation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. As in previous years, a wide range of serious and urgent concerns regarding Israeli practices affecting human rights and international humanitarian law were communicated to the members. The most prominent concerns related to Israel's continuing confiscation of Palestinian land; its continuing demolition of Palestinian homes and other infrastructure, and consequential displacement of families; its continuing expansion of settlements; and the increasingly disturbing phenomenon of violence against Palestinians and their property by Israeli settlers. The impact of Israeli policies and practices affecting children was also consistently raised as being of utmost concern in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

Land confiscation, demolition, displacement and settlements

33. Witnesses briefed the Special Committee regarding Israel's active confiscation of land in the West Bank. According to information received, 17,684 dunums of land had been confiscated from August 2010 to June 2011 and 893 Palestinian homes had been demolished within that period. A steep rise in demolitions in the first six months of 2011 was underlined. With respect to settlements, the members were informed that 9,204 housing units for Israelis were being constructed in settlements in the West Bank at the time of their mission. It was pointed out that most of those units were west of the wall, which suggested Israel's intention to attempt to annex that territory. Furthermore, witnesses highlighted some of the environmental impacts of Israeli settlements, including the effects of solid waste, sewage water and manufacturing refuse that was being dumped on Palestinian land and in Palestinian water supplies. The members were particularly concerned to be informed that plans and tenders already existed for the construction of approximately 50,000 housing units in the West Bank over the next decade. In addition, witnesses recalled that Israel persisted with the construction of the wall, which took up 10 per cent of the territory in the West Bank and isolated 12 per cent of Palestinians from the rest of the West Bank.

34. Israel's confiscation and de facto annexation of farmlands and land containing Palestinian homes and other structures in the Jordan Valley received significant attention. It was stressed that the Jordan Valley constituted the most fertile land in the West Bank and had the most water resources, potential for tourism and economic development. Witnesses stated that Israeli settlers were taking over Palestinian farmlands and exhausting available water resources. It was noted that each Israeli settler was allotted 36 times the amount of water that was available for each Palestinian. It was further noted that additional land in the area was being confiscated just to build roads linking the settlements. The members were also informed that, throughout Area C, Israel was vigorously expanding settlements, establishing "closed military zones" and designating certain areas as nature reserves. Witnesses emphasized that such efforts not only diminished the ability of Palestinians to freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources, but also pushed Palestinians off of their land and out of their traditional livelihoods.

35. The attention of the Special Committee was drawn to the urgency of the situation of the Bedouins in Area C. Witnesses told the Committee that 55 Bedouin homes were under immediate threat of demolition, thus raising concerns about the likely eviction and displacement of hundreds of people. According to information received, within the past year 795 demolition notifications had been issued against Bedouin structures. Moreover, "closed military areas" and nature reserves had greatly restricted cattle-breeding by the Bedouins. One result of such policies was that 79 per cent of the Bedouins in Area C lacked food security. In addition, the Committee was briefed on Israel's plans to relocate approximately 2,300 Bedouins living in Area C. The purpose of the planned relocation of the Bedouins was to make room for the expansion of Israeli settlements.

36. The difficult situation for Palestinians living in East Jerusalem was highlighted to the Special Committee. While it was acknowledged that East Jerusalem was an integral part of the occupied Palestinian territory, it was noted that Palestinians constituted 36 per cent of the population of Jerusalem, yet they only received 9 per cent of the municipal budget. It was also noted that 70 per cent of the Palestinians in

East Jerusalem were living below the poverty line. Israeli interlocutors with whom the Committee met alleged that poverty was a tool used by Israel to subjugate Palestinians in East Jerusalem, in particular to force them to concentrate on everyday survival in lieu of becoming involved in politics or activism. The Committee was informed that $60 million in fines for "illegal" building had been levied against Palestinians in the past 10 years, while 1,074 home demolitions had been carried out by Israeli authorities against Palestinians in the same period. It was further noted that Palestinians were charged heavy fines by Israeli authorities for the demolition of their own homes, thus driving some Palestinians to demolish their own homes to avoid such fines.

37. The members were told of two forms of institutionalized discrimination, the objectives of which appeared to be to drive Palestinians away from East Jerusalem or otherwise control their lives. In the first instance, witnesses referred to the Israeli authorities' policy of not identifying Palestinian neighbourhoods on official street signs, thereby implicitly denying or erasing knowledge of their existence. In the second instance, the Israeli authorities restricted access to zoning, municipal planning, municipal budgets and basic services to lower Palestinians' standards of living. Issues related to zoning and municipal planning were explored in detail and it was stated that Israel used at least six means to restrict Palestinian building, confiscate Palestinian homes and properties, evict Palestinians from their homes and demolish homes and other structures. The Special Committee heard that Israeli authorities did not develop the requisite zoning plans for East Jerusalem; did not provide the necessary infrastructure to support new buildings for Palestinians in East Jerusalem; made it impossible for Palestinians to obtain or provide the necessary documentation to prove that they owned their property; did not officially register the borders of plots owned by Palestinians; dictated that certain areas, for example the "holy basin", were entirely off-limits for construction; and created other obstacles, such as delaying permits until the approval of the "master plan", the development and approval of which were not actually foreseen. It is within this skein of bureaucratic policies that, according to testimony provided to the Committee, Israel was intentionally making life abject for Palestinians in East Jerusalem.

Violence by Israeli settlers against Palestinians and their properties

38. The Special Committee was informed that nearly 500,000 Israeli settlers currently occupied over 40 per cent of the land in the West Bank and that 30 per cent of the Israeli settlements had been built on privately owned Palestinian land. With the expanding presence of Israelis on Palestinian territory, the Committee was informed that violence by settlers against Palestinian civilians and their properties was reaching alarming proportions. According to witnesses, such attacks were especially common around Nablus and Hebron.

39. The Special Committee heard testimony alleging extensive direct cooperation between Israeli settlement organizations, notably the Yesha settlement council, and Israeli authorities. Not only did such cooperation reportedly comprise the surveying of Palestinian land by private Israeli actors and subsequent confiscation by the Government of Israel, it also reportedly comprised advocacy by Israeli settler groups to have Palestinian structures near settlements demolished by Israeli authorities. Yet, the even more disturbing form of cooperation on which the members were briefed consists of Israeli security forces providing protection for

Israeli settlers who violently attack Palestinians and their properties. The Committee received shocking testimony of such cooperation. It was told that, in July 2011 near Burin, the Israel Defense Forces had set up roadblocks to prevent anyone from stopping fires that had been started by Israeli settlers and which had eventually burned down entire Palestinian orchards. The Committee was told of several incidents of Israel Defense Forces protecting Israeli settlers who were actively uprooting Palestinians' olive trees. The members were also told of the unleashing of attack dogs, by Israeli security forces, against Palestinians who were trying to protect themselves or their properties from attacks by Israeli settlers. In addition, the Committee was informed of the developing practice of Israeli security forces and settlers cordoning off land that had been confiscated from Palestinian civilians and establishing settlements, including "outposts", during the middle of the night, with a view to avoiding media coverage or social protests that drew attention to such activities.

40. A number of witnesses stressed that Israeli settlers who perpetrated violence against Palestinians and their properties benefited from near absolute impunity for what was plainly criminal behaviour. In that regard, an overtly discriminatory policy and practice of law enforcement vis-à-vis the settlers and Palestinians was highlighted. One example that was brought to the attention of the Special Committee concerned a settler who had been convicted of killing four Palestinians, yet had only been sentenced to house arrest by the Israeli judiciary.

The situation of children in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem

41. Testimony regarding the situation of children in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, focused on Israeli policies and practices related to the arrest and detention of children and impediments to the right to education. The Special Committee noted with concern the 22 per cent dropout rate in secondary schools in the West Bank and was particularly worried that 75 per cent of students who dropped out were boys. Witnesses stressed that such children increasingly were involved in child labour.

42. The members were informed that the lack of access to education was acute in East Jerusalem, with an urgent need for at least 1,000 classrooms. It was noted that that lack of classrooms was another result of the above-mentioned restrictions on zoning, planning and construction in East Jerusalem, which extended to the expansion of existing construction. The Special Committee was informed that approximately 5,300 children in East Jerusalem did not attend any school at all. It was noted that while there were 56 preschools in West Jerusalem, there were only 2 in East Jerusalem, with the result that 15,000 three- to four-year-old Palestinian children in East Jerusalem were denied the education that the municipality was obligated to provide. The Committee was dismayed to learn that five of East Jerusalem's private schools, which were operated by Palestinians and were providing primary education for over 750 children free of charge, had demolition orders and fines pending against them.

43. Extensive restrictions on freedom of movement in the West Bank impede access to education for Palestinian children, according to information received by the Special Committee. The wall constitutes one example, since Palestinian schools west of the wall are often attended by students and staffed by teachers who live on the east side. Thus, daily access to their schools is severely complicated by the need

to pass through invasive, time-consuming checkpoints. The members were informed that the wall and other restrictions on movement often caused children and teachers to miss school. In general, witnesses explained that such restrictions, in particular the wall, limited the educational choices available to students. That was especially pertinent to students who wished to pursue university studies, since their ability to pursue a specific course, for example in medicine, might not be practicable owing to a lack of reliable access to the relevant educational institution. Yet, even beyond such restrictions, security operations in the vicinity of schools, especially in Area C, and attacks by settlers on children travelling to or from school not infrequently resulted in children not attending classes. The Committee was informed of one instance in which settlers flooded a Palestinian school in Hebron with sewage.

44. Witnesses raised a range of serious concerns regarding Israeli policies and practices related to the arrest and detention of children in the West Bank, in particular East Jerusalem. In 2010 in Silwan and Al-Bustan, Israeli authorities had detained more than 1,200 Palestinian children. The Special Committee was told that one child in every Palestinian family in Silwan had been detained by Israel in 2010. In the West Bank beyond East Jerusalem, the Committee was informed that more than 700 Palestinian children had been detained. The Committee was deeply concerned by reports that children between 8 and 10 years of age were being detained with increasing frequency.

45. The Special Committee was alarmed by allegations concerning the treatment of children once detained. It noted with profound concern that such treatment would amount to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. One witness briefed the members on a survey of 45 cases of children who had been detained. Of those 45 children, 98 per cent had had their hands bound; 91 per cent had been blindfolded; 60 per cent had been kicked and/or beaten; 69 per cent had been arrested after midnight; 60 per cent had been subjected to threats; 56 per cent had been subjected to naked body searches; 76 per cent had been detained inside Israeli territory; 29 per cent had been sexually threatened; and 9 per cent had been sexually attacked. Tellingly, 69 per cent had confessed to the charges against them within one hour, often signing confessions in Hebrew, a language they did not understand. The Committee heard testimony regarding children being beaten with batons and rifle butts, including inside Israeli military vehicles, and being taken to Israeli settlements to be interrogated, where they were confined in toilets, urinated on and forced to drink toilet water.

46. The members were briefed on problematic sentencing practices of Israeli courts that judge Palestinian minors. The Special Committee was informed that families were typically required to pay fines that they could not afford in order for their children to be released. As a result, many children remained in detention for extended periods. The Committee was further informed of an increasingly common Israeli practice of expelling Palestinian children from their homes, thereby requiring children to move to another area and live with persons outside their immediate family, or requiring their entire family to move. It was stated that 12 children in East Jerusalem had received such sentences in the past year. Witnesses noted that that practice appeared to dovetail with Israeli efforts to evict Palestinians from certain areas of East Jerusalem for the purpose of building more settlements, in particular when the significant numbers of children being detained in Silwan and Al-Bustan are noted.

47. The Special Committee received testimony that a significant number of detentions of children were connected to Israeli efforts to impede the right to education. It was reported that waves of arrests of students took place just before or during exam periods and, specifically, that 480 students had been arrested in such circumstances over the past five years. Witnesses stated that students arrested were often detained through the exam period, although 86 students detained in such circumstances remained in detention as of the Committee's mission. Witnesses expressed the view that that practice was aimed at dissuading students from getting involved in politics or activism, since according to reports, students had been informed by Israeli security forces that they would be re-arrested if they participated in protests or otherwise participated in student organizations concerned with political issues.

48. Witnesses described a general context of children in the West Bank who lived in fear of being detained, ill-treated, separated from their families or having their homes demolished. It was emphasized that such fears related not only to Israeli security forces, but also to Israeli settlers. The members were informed that 72 per cent of Palestinian children in the West Bank had been arrested at least once; 16 per cent had been arrested more than once; and 50 per cent of children arrested did not meet a lawyer or family member for months. The members were also informed that, similar to Gaza, there were increasing incidences of post-traumatic stress disorder, bedwetting and a proclivity to respond aggressively to pressure among children in the West Bank.

C. Palestinian prisoners and detainees in Israeli prisons and detention centres

49. As in previous years, the Special Committee was briefed extensively on the situation of Palestinians detained by Israel. Also as in previous years, a wide range of serious concerns were raised with respect to Israel's obligations under international law in relation to Palestinians detained by Israel. These concerns included the legal status of such prisoners; family visits; access to proper medical care; conditions and treatment during detention; concerns particular to female detainees; access to education for detainees; and administrative detention and other forms of incarceration of heightened concern. The members received differing information regarding the current number of detainees, with a range from 5,900 to 7,000. They were informed that there were currently 260 children, 36 women, 220 "administrative detainees" and 9 parliamentarians who were retained. It was brought to the Committee's attention that Israel also detains the bodies of Palestinians who have died during military engagements or other attacks.

50. The members noted with deep regret that, according to one witness, one in every four Palestinians had been detained by Israel since the occupation had begun in 1967. One victim explained to the Special Committee his experience of being detained for two full years without having been charged, under so-called "administrative detention", on the basis of a "secret file" which neither he nor his lawyer had ever seen. In addition, the Committee's attention was drawn to a new policy of continuing to imprison Palestinians at the conclusion of their sentences, under the designation of "illegitimate fighter" status, as well as a new Israeli law allowing for the detention of any Palestinian who has previously been detained.

51. Several interlocutors raised questions regarding the legal status, under international law, of Palestinians detained by Israel. The Special Committee was informed that Israel applied either domestic legislation or Ottoman laws to Palestinian detainees. Yet it was noted that persons had been arrested in a broad range of circumstances, including having been arrested while in uniform. Witnesses questioned whether some detainees should be accorded prisoner of war status and whether many detainees should be recognized as political prisoners. The view was widely expressed that the international community was not holding Israel accountable with respect to its international legal obligations in relation to Palestinian prisoners. Several witnesses expressed hope that the Committee would focus the attention of the international community on Israeli policies and practices relating to Palestinian prisoners.

52. Witnesses repeatedly noted that nearly five years had passed with Israel not allowing family visits. The members were told that, while in Gaza the overall travel ban inhibited family visits, in the West Bank Israeli "security measures" made such visits impossible in practice. It was recalled that Israel had proposed the possibility of allowing videoconferencing or specific families to visit, in particular for elderly or sick prisoners. Yet such developments had never materialized. It was also repeatedly noted that Israel's practice of detaining Palestinians inside Israeli territory lead to the de facto ban on family visits, and that that practice was in flagrant violation of international humanitarian law. The Special Committee heard numerous testimonies about divided Palestinian families, including fathers, sons and husbands who had never met their children, participated in daughters' weddings, attended children's school graduation, or been present at parents' funerals.

53. Testimony regarding the situation of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails included allegations regarding the lack of medical treatment. In many cases such testimony extended to allegations of medical negligence. The members of the Special Committee were told that 1,500 Palestinians currently detained had urgent medical needs, including with respect to serious diseases. The members were also told that medical facilities for prisoners were not only limited, but also were not different from normal prison facilities and that that included a harsh regime of inspections and raids to which all patients were subjected. It was asserted by some witnesses that there was a practice of testing pharmaceuticals on Palestinian prisoners and that that might explain not only the high rate of deaths of prisoners, but also the poor state of health in which many prisoners were released. It was alleged that there had been 203 deaths of Palestinian prisoners owing to such experimentation.

54. The Special Committee received extensive testimony regarding treatment of detainees and conditions of prisons. While general deprivations of food, clothes, books and other basic needs were noted, testimony also consisted of allegations of treatment and conditions that would amount to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. The use of solitary confinement, including for extended periods of time, was highlighted by several witnesses as a common form of punishment. One case brought to the members' attention concerned the solitary confinement of a prisoner for over nine years. The deeply negative impacts on mental and physical health of this practice were stressed by several interlocutors. Furthermore, the Committee heard allegations of treatment of detainees that involved such practices as deprivation of sleep; beatings, including on the head; insults regarding nationality and family members; denial of ability to observe

religious practices; prevention of bathing for periods of up to 30 days; denial of visits from lawyers; being forced to remain in awkward positions for long periods of time; filling cells with insects; naked inspections, including the aggressive grabbing of testicles and attempts to force objects into the anus; and the spilling of hot liquids, including oil. The Committee also heard allegations of an increase in methods of psychological torture, which included threats of suffocation and sexual assault. The Committee was informed that more than 700 cases concerning allegations of such treatment that had been brought to the attention of the legal adviser to the Israeli Government had resulted in zero investigations. According to this witness, while the Government of Israel had not denied the allegations in 20 per cent of those cases, it was claimed that such treatment was in response to so-called "ticking time-bomb" cases.

55. The Special Committee heard specific concerns regarding the situation of female Palestinian detainees, including from women who had been imprisoned by Israel. It was noted that as of the Committee's mission, 36 Palestinian women were imprisoned. Whereas a lack of female doctors for female prisoners was highlighted, women testified to having to accept being put in solitary confinement in exchange for receiving medical treatment. One witness stated that his relative, a female detainee, had been in solitary confinement for two years and was not allowed to have any communications with family members or receive any books. Another witness recounted being detained in an undignified manner, placed in an underground cell that was full of insects, exposed to an extremely cold air conditioner, interrogated for eight hours without sleep and subjected to beatings. The same witness told the Committee that she had not been allowed to see either a lawyer or a representative of the International Committee of the Red Crescent for three weeks, and that when the Israeli authorities had found out that she was pregnant, she had not been given appropriate medical care or proper sustenance. Furthermore, she described giving birth to her child while chained to the bed without any blankets and stated that even though she had not been able to nurse her baby, prison authorities had refused to provide appropriate milk. The Committee noted with deep concern reports that there were many women who were sentenced while pregnant, had children, and were forced to keep their children with them in prison.

56. Several witnesses and organizations referred to remarks made by the Prime Minister of Israel on 24 June 2011, to the effect that Palestinian prisoners would be given harsher treatment, stricter penalties and no longer be allowed to pursue educational opportunities. It was noted that, at that time, there were 280 Palestinians pursuing university studies from prison, and 1,800 Palestinians pursuing a secondary degree from prison. Witnesses noted that the carrying out of the Prime Minister's remarks would result in violations of prisoners' rights and would likely amount to collective punishment. Witnesses asserted that since the Prime Minister had made his remarks, there had been an increase in cell raids and inspections, including the undressing and beating of inmates, decreased access to food and television facilities and new prohibitions related to cultural and religious practices.

V. Situation of human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan

57. As mentioned above, the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic at the time of the Special Committee's mission to the region prevented a visit to that country. The

members therefore had to engage with witnesses and victims in the occupied Syrian Golan by way of teleconferences. Nonetheless, several concerns regarding Israel's compliance with its international legal obligations in relation to its occupation of the Syrian Golan were raised. Much of the testimony received is consistent with information obtained by the Committee in previous years, in particular that involving the situation of Syrians detained by Israel, restrictions on freedom of movement, the use of landmines and access to water for agricultural use.

58. Witnesses expressed frustration at the high prices they were forced to pay for water, especially since the water was from Syrian territory. They noted that Israeli settlers paid significantly lower rates for water and had access to significantly more water. It was emphasized that Israel's control of the water supply resulted in diminished yields for Syrian farmers. Witnesses informed the members that during an unusually dry season in 2010, access to water had been entirely cut off for Syrian farmers. Yet, Israeli settlers had been provided with water throughout the season. The members were further informed that Syrian farmers had reaped only 10 per cent of maximum agricultural production over the past year.

59. The Special Committee was informed that Israel continued to inhibit Syrian families from visiting with their relatives outside the occupied Golan. It was explained that separated families could only seek to maintain relationships through telephone conversations and the Internet, or otherwise through chain link and barbed wire fences. The Committee was briefed regarding a 2-kilometre-long, 8-metre-high wall that Israel is building to cordon off the occupied Syrian Golan and was further informed that that wall would cut off the "valley of screams", where separated Syrians in the occupied Golan came to communicate with family members outside the occupied territory. It was asserted that another purpose of the wall was to consolidate Israel's annexation of Syrian territory. Witnesses also explained that the border area around the occupied Golan remained heavily embedded with landmines.

60. Several interlocutors in the occupied Syrian Golan referred to the 2011 commemoration of Nakba Day (15 May) and Naksa Day (5 June), during which Israeli security forces had used live fire against Syrian protestors. Witnesses informed the members that on Naksa Day between 20 and 24 Syrians had been killed by Israeli forces, including some as a result of Israeli landmines, while approximately 340 Syrians had been wounded. The Special Committee heard complaints regarding the conditions of Syrian detainees held by Israel. Main concerns consisted of limited family visits, insulting treatment during family visits and denial of educational opportunities for prisoners. Witnesses also stated that dozens of Syrians remained in detention without having had any formal charges brought against them.

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

61. The Special Committee benefited greatly from being able to see the situation in the Gaza Strip first-hand and, in particular, from the opportunity to engage directly with victims, witnesses and organizations in Gaza. It is regrettable that Israel continues to refuse to engage in a dialogue with the Committee, which not only prevents the members from seeing the situation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan for themselves, but also deprives many victims and witnesses of the opportunity to share their stories and experiences

with the Committee. Ultimately, it is the General Assembly and the international community at large that are denied the chance to have a clearer picture of the human impact of Israel's policies and practices in these territories.

62. **The Special Committee calls upon the Government of Israel to cooperate with it in the implementation of its mandate, in accordance with its obligations as a Member State and, in particular, in light of the General Assembly's demand in resolution 65/102.**

63. **The Special Committee urges the Security Council and the General Assembly to adopt measures to address Israel's long track record of non-cooperation with the United Nations, especially resolutions of the Council and the Assembly, and mechanisms established by the Assembly and its subsidiary bodies. Such measures may include the imposition of sanctions aimed at persuading Israel to fulfil its obligations as a Member State.**

64. The Special Committee finds that the situation of children in the occupied Palestinian territory is alarming. This is especially attributable to Israel's siege of Gaza. Yet, children in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, are also suffering under Israel's policies and practices.

65. **The Special Committee calls upon Israel to take immediate actions to reverse indicators of poor children's health in Gaza. Such actions should include regularly facilitating the importation of sufficient foodstuffs and medical supplies, as well as facilitating travel outside Gaza for children requiring medical treatment.**

66. **The Special Committee calls upon Israel to desist from its policies and practices that are denying thousands of children in Gaza their right to education. As a matter of urgency, Israel should immediately approve the construction of the 100 new schools requested in the UNRWA Gaza recovery plan and ensure the importation of school supplies sufficient to meet the needs of all school-age children in Gaza.**

67. **The Special Committee encourages Israel to give serious consideration to the potential consequences for the children of Gaza of being raised in an environment characterized by deprivation and lack of opportunities. The Committee also encourages Israel to give consideration to the potential results of having a role, consistent with its international legal obligations, in ensuring that the children of Gaza are empowered and able to live productive and meaningful lives. In this regard, the Committee strongly urges Israel to place utmost priority on fulfilling its international legal obligations relevant to children in Gaza.**

68. **The Special Committee calls upon Israel to bring its policies and practices concerning the arrest, detention and sentencing of minors into line with international laws and standards relevant to children. In this connection, all allegations of mistreatment of children in detention should be thoroughly and transparently investigated, perpetrators of violations against children should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law and any officials involved in security operations or judicial processes concerning children should be comprehensively trained in applicable international laws and standards.**

69. **The Special Committee calls upon Israel to ensure that Palestinian children in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, can fully enjoy their right to education. This requires that schools be built in East Jerusalem to accommodate the 1,000 classrooms that are urgently needed. Furthermore, extensive restrictions on freedom of movement in place throughout the West Bank, in particular owing to the wall, should be removed.**

70. The Special Committee remains troubled that Israel continues to detain thousands of Palestinians, many for extended periods of time and in conditions and subject to treatment that appears to violate international law. The members are of the view that the situation of Palestinian prisoners detained by Israel merits closer attention from the international community, including through the General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies.

71. **The Special Committee calls upon Israel to bring its policies and practices concerning the arrest, detention and sentencing of Palestinians into line with international laws and standards. This should include meeting its obligations in relation to allowing family visits, providing proper medical care, facilitating access to education, ensuring that due process and fair trial rights are respected, and preventing torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.**

72. **The Special Committee urges the General Assembly to take action aimed at compelling Israel to meet its international obligations concerning Palestinian detainees. Such action should address the concerns raised in this and previous reports of the Committee, and may include the establishment of an independent, international mechanism comprised of experts in relevant international laws and standards to monitor, report and carry out advocacy relating specifically to the situation of Palestinians detained by Israel.**

73. Having familiarized itself directly with the situation in Gaza, the Special Committee is convinced that Israel's oppressive policies constitute a form of collective punishment of civilians. Israel's regime of closures and the practices by which this regime is enforced are having a disproportionate impact on civilians. It is in this light that Israel's siege must be adjudged to be in violation of international humanitarian law and to result in the violation of a wide range of Israel's obligations under international human rights law.

74. **The Special Committee reiterates its call for Israel to lift its illegal siege of Gaza, with due regard to legitimate security concerns. Lifting the siege should include immediate actions to ensure a regular, sufficient supply of food, medicines and other basic supplies and services, in line with Security Council resolution 1860 (2009). It should also extend to increasing the capacities of Israeli crossing points for cargo and commercial goods in order to ensure that the UNRWA Gaza recovery plan can be fully implemented.**

75. **The Special Committee calls upon Israel to clarify the restrictions it intends to enforce on freedom of movement within Gaza and to ensure that its security forces and the population of Gaza are fully informed regarding the details of such restrictions. Israeli security forces should not enforce such restrictions through the use of live weapons fire. Furthermore, such restrictions should respect Gaza's critical agricultural and fishing industries. In relation to maritime territory, the Committee calls upon Israel to bring its policy into line**

with what it agreed as part of the Oslo Accords, namely a 20 nautical mile limit for Gaza's fishermen.

76. With regard to the West Bank, the Special Committee was dismayed that many of Israel's policies and practices highlighted in its previous reports remain of urgent concern. Confiscation of Palestinian land, demolition of Palestinian homes, displacement of Palestinian civilians and expansion of Israeli settlements continue to take place on a widespread and systematic basis. At present, the situations in East Jerusalem, the Jordan Valley and with respect to the Bedouin in the West Bank are of utmost concern.

77. **The Special Committee calls upon Israel to desist from confiscating any further land in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and to develop and implement, in consultation with relevant Palestinian officials, a plan to return land that has been confiscated to its rightful owners. The Committee also calls upon Israel to cease the demolition of Palestinian homes and to provide appropriate reparation to Palestinians who have already had their homes demolished.**

78. **The Special Committee recalls the many United Nations resolutions and reports that have made clear that Israel's policies and practices related to transferring its population to the occupied Palestinian territory are illegal. In doing so, the Committee stresses the need for Israel to desist from the expansion of Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory and to dismantle all settlements previously built.**

79. **The Special Committee further recalls that East Jerusalem forms an integral part of the occupied Palestinian territory and calls upon Israel to end its policies and practices that oppress the Palestinian population of East Jerusalem. As an initial step, Israel should adopt positive measures to end institutionalized discrimination against Palestinians in East Jerusalem, including by ensuring access to basic services and removing obstacles — bureaucratic or otherwise — to Palestinian efforts to build homes, schools and other infrastructure.**

80. **The Special Committee calls upon Israel to take immediate, effective measures to end violence against Palestinians by Israeli settlers. This must include informing Israeli security forces in the West Bank of their responsibilities to protect Palestinian civilians and their properties from any form of violence by Israeli settlers. Such measures should also extend to investigating any incidents of violence and criminally prosecuting perpetrators.**

81. The Special Committee regrets that its discussions with victims, witnesses and organizations concerned with the situation in the occupied Syrian Golan indicated that no progress has been made by Israel with respect to meeting its obligations under human rights and international humanitarian law. On the contrary, in addition to concerns that have been highlighted in previous years, specific incidents over the past year and the construction of a wall to cordon off Syrian territory in the occupied Golan have escalated the level of concern regarding Israeli policies and practices there.

82. **The Special Committee calls upon Israel to ensure access to water for Syrians in the occupied Golan, including for agricultural purposes, on terms at least equal to those made available to Israeli settlers.**

83. The Special Committee reiterates its call upon Israel to facilitate visits for Syrians in the occupied Golan with family members in other parts of Syrian territory.

84. The Special Committee calls upon Israel to carry out a full, transparent investigation into the events of Nakba Day and Naksa Day 2011, with a view to explaining the many deaths and injuries of unarmed Syrian civilians.